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AFGHANISTAN

SUCCESS STORY

Projects Earn Trust in Tagab

USAID's work in Tagab bridges communities with their government



Photo: USAID/Afghanistan

Local workers rebuilding Tagab District



Photo: USAID/Afghanistan

Representatives from Tagab's 80 villages attend a ribbon-cutting to celebrate the beginning of road construction.

"The local government and the communities are interdependent."

- Mullah Mohammad Hakeem, Tagab District Governor

In November of 2007, USAID began working directly in the heart of conflict in Afghanistan. Tagab, located in Kapisa Province, is one of the country's most underserved and insecure districts.

When USAID team members began visiting the region in August 2007, the team received anything but a warm welcome. On their first visit, their vehicle was attacked by armed men who demanded they evacuate the vehicle. However, after the team members explained they were in Tagab to help, the attackers invited them to sit and have tea.

Prior to USAID's work in Tagab, the district rarely experienced productive development activities, and in 2006, the national government lost control of the district. According to local sources, 513 people have been killed in internal conflicts in Tagab since the fall of the Taliban. There is almost no interaction between the government and local communities.

Community development teams worked with the local government to identify community leaders with whom to initiate discussions. These meetings between government and citizens resulted in a list of community prioritized development projects for the district. Residents of Tagab quickly realized the power of trust, unity, and commitment. USAID provided additional support including tools, equipment, and grants to implement these projects.

On February 21, 2008, representatives of all of Tagab's 80 villages united for a ribbon-cutting ceremony to inaugurate a road graveling project. The ceremony was followed by a gathering at the Tagab Governor's office, at which, for the very first time, local government representatives and citizens discussed their community with enthusiasm and candor.

"Unless we get the full support of local citizens, Tagab District Administration is unable to address their issues. The local government and the communities are interdependent," said Mr. Mullah Mohammad Hakeem, Tagab District Governor.

Community representative Mr. Sabrullah said, "We are simple human beings and we definitely favor peace and stability. We will never be insurgents and we will never support insurgent activities if we have jobs, education, health services, graveled roads, cleaned canals, and other community services."